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D. Blumenthal is relied upon a good deal for key anecdotes, but the author carefully avoids overreliance on any given secondary source. Italian material should perhaps have been used to fill in some gaps, especially regarding the Crown of Aragon, but it is understandable given the size of his task that Phillips chose to stick to works specifically on Iberia. The recent work of Aurelia Martín Cáceres also shows that the contours of Iberian slavery are better known now than ever, and, in sum, the literature exists which could have enabled Phillips to delineate these more strongly.

In conclusion, as has been suggested, this work will prove an invaluable introduction and synopsis for students and younger scholars, and a handy reference work for more advanced scholars. But the definitive synopsis of modern scholarship on the chronology and contours of Iberian slavery (in other words, a new Verlinden) remains to be written. Indeed, the continuing ferment in recent debate shows that we are at a very exciting time for Iberian slavery studies, and Phillips has provided a rock upon which much new work will long be anchored.

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TODD PRESTON, *King Alfred's Book of Laws: A Study of the "Domboc" and Its Influence on English Identity, with a Complete Translation*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. Pp. 177. \$45. ISBN 978-0-7864-6588-0.
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The voice of King Alfred the Great has produced one of the most enduring monarchical echoes in English literary history. Credited with the salvation of England from Viking domination, with an educational program aimed at the regeneration of learning and religion, and with having personally translated books that were deemed essential for the success of that program, Alfred's reputation rests not only on what others said about him but also on what he supposedly said to his contemporaries. No one sums up the fame of Alfred's voice more eloquently than Winston Churchill: "In the grim time of Norman overlordship the figure of the great Alfred was a beacon light. . . . The ruler who had taught them courage and self-reliance in the eternal Danish wars, who had sustained them with his national and religious faith, who had given them laws and good governance and chronicled their heroic deeds, was celebrated in legend and song as Alfred the Great" (*A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* [London, 1956], 96). The construction, reception, and reputation of Alfred's voice is the subject of Todd Preston's study of King Alfred's *Domboc*, a collection of legal articles preceded by a long prologue in which these articles are put in the context of Mosaic law and its reinterpretation in the New Testament.

In a concise and well-focused study Preston sets out to analyze "King Alfred's *Domboc* as an important foundation narrative for both the Anglo-Saxons, and, later, the English" (1). Following the introduction, four chapters are ordered chronologically, and discuss (1) the relation between kingship, law, and national identity, (2) the *Domboc* in Alfredian politics and ideas, (3) its redeployments in the law codes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and (4) the significance of the *Domboc* for Elizabethan scholars. Barring some typos, the book is neatly presented, with a section of endnotes, a two-page index, and a bibliography, which sadly omits important recent work on ninth-century text production. In a long appendix, Preston provides the entire text of the *Domboc* in the form of a "diplomatic transcription" from a single manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173), and his own translation. Preston's warning that his translation "can be somewhat stilted or awkward in parts" (106) because he stayed close to the original should be taken seriously: ModE "will"

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for OE *wille* (prol. 35); “middle-earth” for *middangeard* (prol. 49); “no other book-book” for *nanra domboca oþerra* (prol. 49.6.); and no translation for *misdæda* (23.1) are a few less fortunate instances. In 18.1 *swa we ær be læwedum men fundon* is translated as “as we have arranged before for laymen”: the plural “laymen” for the singular *læwedum men* hides the fact that the reference is to the rape or sexual assault of a laywoman.

Despite Preston’s subtitle, it is actually the prologue which dominates much of the discussion in chapters 1 and 2 and plays the most important role in the entire book. The reason for this slight imbalance is that Preston finds most of the arguments for his thesis in the prologue, which he therefore analyzes in great detail. According to Preston, previous critics, including Patrick Wormald, have not paid enough attention to the significance of the *Domboc* as an instrument for King Alfred to build his image as a king and to create “a sense of national identity among the Anglo-Saxons” (17). The use of Alfred’s name, the fact that he is referred to as *westseaxna cyning*, and the attempts to frame an analogical connection between biblical law and Anglo-Saxon law, as well as a typological connection between Moses/Christ and Alfred, are all presented as parts of Alfred’s program to reconstitute kingship and nationhood.

Preston’s argumentation in chapters 1 and 2 demonstrates an unquestioned conviction that Alfred personally wrote the prologue and translated not only the biblical part of the prologue but also the other books commonly attributed to him (see, for example, pp. 19, 20, 25, 26, 29, 32, 36, 40, 44, 45). Alternative views, such as articulated by Malcolm Godden, are left unmentioned (“Did King Alfred Write Anything?”, *Medium Ævum* 76 [2007]. 1–23). Godden compares Alfred’s reputed authorship with a similar case of royal attribution of the laws written by Archbishop Wulfstan but attributed to King Æthelræd II. On the basis of this case of “ventriloquising” (and there are many others), Godden expressed doubts about Alfred’s personal authorship of the *Domboc*—as he did for the other works attributed to Alfred—and came to the conclusion that it was written by others for the king. Godden’s doubts are serious enough to be discussed, together with arguments in favor of Alfred’s authorship. Preston’s unexpected statement at the end of the book (106) that the prologue was written “in Alfred’s voice” only raises confusion. The same statement at the beginning of the book, with a discussion of the arguments, would have supplied much-needed clarity.

Fortunately, the question of King Alfred’s personal involvement with the composition and translation of the *Domboc* affects neither its literary quality nor its afterlife. The image of Anglo-Saxon kingship and nationhood struck a chord with later rulers, such as Canute, William the Conqueror, and Henry I, all of whom incorporated Alfred’s laws in their own codification. As Preston shows, for the lawmakers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, who acted in times of conquest, the *Domboc* provided a sense of continuity and legitimacy—to which the name of Alfred can only have made a contribution. Likewise, this image was noticed by Elizabethan pioneers of Old English scholarship, such as Archbishop Matthew Parker, his secretary John Joscelyn, and the antiquarian William Lambarde, who incorporated (parts of) the *Domboc* in the first early modern editions of Old English texts. The importance of the *Domboc* as an inspiration for Elizabethan religious and political strategies can only have benefited from its association with King Alfred. A reference to Matthew Parker’s *Ælfredi regis res gestae* (1574), the first edition of Asser’s *Life of King Alfred*, would have strengthened Preston’s argument.

In all, Todd Preston’s literary interpretation of the *Domboc* in the context of its production and the various stages of its reception is an effective demonstration of the enduring significance of this Anglo-Saxon legal text and forms a challenging addition to the study of Anglo-Saxon law and to that of King Alfred the Great.

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